

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

White Water to Blue Water:

An Oceans, Fisheries and Coastal Zone Partnership Initiative for the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Vision

Healthy, well-managed and productive marine and coastal ecosystems that support stable and secure economies and livelihoods in coastal countries, through implementation of integrated coastal, ocean and fisheries management programs in 25 percent of coastal nations by 2015.

In the Wider Caribbean Region, a 25 percent improvement in the quality of domestic wastewater discharged into coastal waters and watersheds from urban areas by 2015.

Challenge

"Sustainable development and poverty reduction cannot be achieved without healthy oceans and coasts" (UNESCO Oceans Conference). Today, more than 50 percent of the world's population lives in coastal areas and depends heavily on oceans and coastal resources for survival. That percentage will rise to 75 percent by 2025. In many developing countries, fish may account for up to 60 percent of the animal protein consumed; yet, approximately 70 percent of the world's fish stocks are fully fished or over fished. A significant proportion of marine pollution come from ships, and worldwide shipping is expected to triple over the next twenty years. About 25 percent of coral reefs worldwide have been lost in the last twenty years, and almost two-thirds of the reefs in the Wider Caribbean are threatened by human activities. Overfishing, pollution, degradation of habitats, and natural disasters increasingly undermine the ability of coastal populations to meet basic health, economic and social needs. The result is loss of food security, greater risk of health impacts, and missed opportunities for sustainable economic development.

Agenda 21 & Millennium Declaration Goals

The White Water to Blue Water partnership initiative is intended to help implement the following international commitments: the Barbados Programme of Action, the Montreal Declaration of the Global Program of Action, the Jakarta Mandate of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNCLOS, the Cartagena Convention and its three protocols, the International Coral Reef Initiative, the FAO Compliance Agreement, the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and the 2000 Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

Program

The Oceans Initiative will begin with a pilot program in the Wider Caribbean in 2003. The pilot program is designed to promote cross-sectoral management of watersheds and marine ecosystems. Similar programs could expand to Africa and the South Pacific in 2004 and 2005. Objectives include:

- Strengthening national and regional institutional capacity to implement cross-sectoral watershed and marine ecosystem management.
- Facilitating closer cooperation and good governance within and among nations, regional agencies and civil society in coastal and marine resource management, water management, health, environmental protection, agriculture, and urban planning.
- Engaging business partners in the major global growth sectors, such as tourism, to promote best business and environment

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practices, and to support regional activities in watershed and marine coastal management.

Initiating Action

The initiative will begin with a U.S.-hosted kick-off conference in 2003 for Wider Caribbean stakeholders and partners to identify areas for improved regional cooperation and national capacity building in cross-sectoral watershed and marine ecosystem management. The conference will also provide networking and “match-making” opportunities between implementing organizations and potential funders. Representatives from Africa and the Pacific Small Island States will be invited to participate to facilitate similar efforts in those regions. Further activities addressing particular problem areas, such as fisheries, coral reefs and pollution from sewage and shipping, will follow.

Examples of Potential Follow-On Activities

- Support the need and desire for more integrated/ holistic environmental management and policy frameworks in the region.
- Promote improved environmental governance through integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to water, land and coastal management, modeled after the “Ridge-to-Reef” concept.
- Promote sustainable fisheries through reducing illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing (with the FAO), integrating fisheries and coral reef management efforts, reducing by-catch and promoting environmentally sound aquaculture.
- Build a “Meso-American Coral Reef Alliance” among donors, foundations, NGOs and corporations.
- Promote capacity building and financial support to upgrade sewage treatment and agricultural runoff management in the Wider Caribbean, in cooperation with the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the Global Program of Action on land-based sources of marine pollution (GPA).

- Host training workshops on U.S. geographic information systems (GIS) and remote-sensing capabilities and develop a regional GIS infrastructure.
- Build sustainable tourism in cooperation with the private sector (e.g., hotels, cruise lines, and other organizations).
- Promote cooperative measures to combat ship-based pollution and the introduction of invasive species.

Interested and Potential Partners

- Governments: UK, France, Spain, governments of the Wider Caribbean Region
- NGOs, Universities, and Foundations: IUCN, UN Foundation, Ocean Conservancy, Sloan Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society, the Nature Conservancy, Consortium for Ocean Research and Education (CORE), Oceana; the Universities of Miami, Delaware, Rhode Island, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands
- International Organizations: UNEP CEP, GPA, IOC-Caribbean, IMO
- Private Sector: Hotels, cruise lines and tourism industry, plus others

Monitoring Arrangements

Monitoring and evaluation of the White Water to Blue Water initiative will take place as an integral part of the program. For example, a steering group comprised of stakeholders in the Wider Caribbean Region will be formed to plan the kickoff conference. The steering group will have primary responsibility for developing monitoring and evaluation arrangements. At a minimum, however, conference participants’ priorities and resources are expected to substantially determine the exact nature of the follow-on activities. Evaluations of the conference, including all capacity building workshops offered at the conference, will be used to adapt follow-on activities. ☺

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